

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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/092 W

-----124179 291116Z /23

R 281335Z JUL 78
FM AMCONSULL DURBAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3009
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJ: INDIAN COUNCIL PASSES RESOLUTION ON DISINVESTMENT,
THEN PROROGUES IN PROTEST AGAINST SAG POLICIES

REF: A. DURBAN A-14 B. DURBAN 304

1. SUMMARY: THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN COUNCIL (SAIC) PROROGUED UNEXPECTEDLY JULY 26 IN PROTEST AGAINST SAG INACTION ON REQUESTS FOR CHANGE AND THE LATTER'S CONTINUED POLICY OF REMOVING INDIAN TRADERS FROM CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS. BEFORE TAKING THE STEP IT PASSED A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE AMERICAN NAACP NOT TO SUPPORT US DISINVESTMENT IN SA AND CALLING FOR "SOFT-LOANS" TO SA BLACKS. WHILE ONE MOTIVATION FOR THE DECISION TO PROROGUE MAY HAVE BEEN THE SAIC'S STRATEGY OF PLAYING TO THE SAG'S DESIRE FOR ITS SUPPORT FOR THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS, THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE WAS ITS FRUSTRATION WITH SAG INACTION. THE PROROGUING MAY SIGNAL THE BEGINNING OF AN UNCERTAIN ERA IN OFFICIAL INDIAN-SAG RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN A SURPRISE MOVE INDUCED BY FRUSTRATIONS OVER SAG POLICIES AND INACTION ON REPEATED REQUESTS FOR CHANGE, THE SAIC PROROGUED ITSELF INDEFINITELY JULY 26. THE DECISION CAME AFTER A REFORM PARTY LEADER OFFERED A MOTION THAT THE SAIC ADJOURN SINE DIE IN PROTEST AGAINST THE SAG'S REFUSAL TO REVERSE ITS POLICY OF REMOVING INDIAN TRADERS FROM CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS IN NORTHERN TRANSVAAL CITIES. SAIC CHAIRMAN, A.M. MOOLA, AN

ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE WHO HAD BLOCKED A SIMILAR MOVE IN THE SAIC'S LAST MEETING (REF A), SUPPORTED THE MOTION AND SAID IF IT DID NOT PASS HE WOULD RESIGN THE CHAIRMANSHIP.

3. THE MOTION DELINEATED THE FREQUENT SAIC REQUESTS FOR POSITIVE AND SPECIFIC CHANGE, THE SAG'S PROMISES OF ACTION, AND THE FORMER'S FRUSTRATION WHEN MOST OF THOSE PROMISES WENT UNFULFILLED. IT CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE AND GAVE THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE A MANDATE TO CONFRONT THE SAG AND DEMAND A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO ITS REQUESTS. AT MOOLA'S URGING THE SAIC PASSED THE MOTION UNANIMOUSLY.

4. BESIDES A SHORT DISCUSSION ABOUT THE NEW SAIC ELECTORAL ACT WHICH WILL PERMIT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, POPULAR ELECTION OF SAIC MEMBERS (DURBAN 326), THE ONLY OTHER MATTERS WHICH GENERATED ANY DEBATE DURING THE SESSION WAS AN IMPROMPTU MOTION AGAINST DISINVESTMENT. THE LATTER WAS OFFERED BY EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN J.N. REDDY WHO SAID HE WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR OF THE NAACP'S PLANS TO SUPPORT DISINVESTMENT. THE COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY PASSED A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE NAACP TO REVERSE ITSELF AND SUPPORT EVEN LARGER INVESTMENT WHILE PUSHING THE USG TO GRANT SOUTH AFRICAN BLACKS "SOFT LOANS" SIMILAR TO THOSE GIVEN TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND CALLING ON THE SAG TO DISMANTLE DISCRIMINATION TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE ANTI-DISINVESTMENT FORCES.

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5. COMMENT: THE MOST IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR THE PROROGUING WAS THE SAIC'S FRUSTRATION WITH THE SAG AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, MOOLA'S BELIEF THAT HE HAD BEEN DECEIVED ON THE TRADER ISSUE. AFTER AN INSPECTION TOUR OF A NUMBER OF TRANSVAAL TOWNS WHERE THE SAG CONTEMPLATED REMOVING INDIAN TRADERS, MOOLA PROTESTED AGAINST THE SAG'S POLICY AND REMINDED INDIAN AFFAIRS MINISTER MARAIS STEYN OF EARLIER PROMISE TO GIVE A SYMPATHETIC HEARING TO THE SAIC'S OPINION. A FEW DAYS AGO STEYN TOLD THE PRESS THAT EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE SITUATION HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND WAS SATISFIED, AND THEREFORE THE REMOVAL OF TRADERS AND THEIR ACCOMMODATION IN NEW FACILITIES FAR FROM TOWN CENTERS WOULD CONTINUE. THE SAIC, ESPECIALLY MOOLA, REACTED ANGRILY. MOOLA SAID HE HAD NOW HAD ENOUGH AND STATED IT WAS NOW APPARENT THAT THE CHARGE THAT THE SAIC WAS ONLY A USELESS "TALKING SHOP" WITH NO REAL INFLUENCE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY WAS TRUE. HE AND HIS FELLOW CONSERVATIVES PROBABLY TOOK THIS STEP AS PART OF A LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO MANIPULATE THE SAG'S DESIRE FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS BY "PLAYING HARD TO GET" (REF B) AND DEMANDING CONCESSIONS AND CHANGES TO WHICH IT CAN POINT TO JUSTIFY ITS EXISTENCE AND PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE SYSTEM.

6. THE PROROGUING HAS PLACED THE SAG IN A DILEMMA. IN ORDER TO SATISFY EVEN THE SAIC'S MOST MODERATE DEMANDS, WHICH INCLUDE OPEN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS, REPEAL OF THE GROUP AREAS ACT, AND REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION, THE SAG WOULD RISK WHITE ANGER. IF, ON THE OTHER HAD, IT CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO BUDGE, THE SAG WILL RISK LOSING THE SUPPORT OF THE MOST MODERATE AND COOPERATIVE INSTITUTION OF ITS KIND. THE SAG MAY FACE EVEN GREATER PROBLEMS WHEN THE SAIC BECOMES AN ELECTED BODY DOMINATED, AS APPEARS LIKELY, BY ANTI-SAG PARTIES.

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